MODULE 1: IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AND THE DESIRED OUTCOME

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</tbody>
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Module 1

Identifying the Problem and the Desired Outcome

Objectives

Upon completing this session, the reader should be able to:

- Identify and define the problem
- Use a problem solving approach to generate a solution
- Carry out a force field and SWOT analysis
- Find, appraise and apply the evidence
Defining a problem so that it is relevant to decision-makers begins with awareness that a problem exists or, more specifically, that there is a difference between the actual and desired state of affairs. It is essential for the advocate for change to be very clear about what the problem really is. To go forward not being clear or not having analysed the problem will send you, the advocate for change, on the wrong solution path.

Following an analysis of the problem, you will be ready to consider the range of solutions available to you. This task will be aided by the use of a number of tools and this module will provide you with some examples and exercises.

The problem

Problem identification is not a simple task. Also, one person’s problem is another person’s satisfactory state of affairs. A problem occurs when there is a difference between “what should be” and “what is”, between the ideal and the actual situation. A problem:

• expresses the difference between the hoped for and the actual situation; and
• is directly or indirectly related to the health of the population.

Before something can be said to be a problem, you have to:

• be aware of the discrepancy;
• be under pressure to take action; and
• have the resources necessary to take action.

How do you become aware you have a discrepancy? You have to make a comparison between the current state of affairs and some standard. What is that standard? It can be past performance, previously set goals, or the performance of some other unit within the organization or in other organizations.

The problem must also be such that it puts some type of pressure to act. Pressure might include organizational policies, deadlines, financial crises, complaints, expectations from management, a proposed change or a continuing community demand.
Finally, you are not likely to describe something as a problem if you think that you do not have the authority, budget, information or other resources necessary to act on it. When you believe you have a problem and are under pressure to act, but feel you have inadequate resources, you usually describe the situation as one in which unrealistic expectations are being placed on you.

**Problem description**

Before attempting to solve a problem, you need to describe it in detail. You do this so you can understand how the problem affects the process being examined, such as delivery of a health service to a community. *(See Exercise Sheet 1.1)*

**Example: Health Centre Case Study**

*A health centre receives complaints from users regarding the quality of the services. A discrepancy exists between the numbers of complaints currently being received in comparison to the previous year. The number of complaints is now reaching a volume that is unacceptable.*

**How frequently does the problem occur?**
Verbal and written complaints are being received on a daily basis.

**When does it generally occur?**
It appears to have started following a reduction in staffing levels.

**Where does it generally occur?**
The location is not relevant to this situation.

**Who is most affected?**
Obviously the users are, but so are the staff as they are becoming quite agitated by the complaints and the workload they are experiencing.

The problem can therefore be summarized as: **Patient dissatisfaction, affecting both patients and staff, which appears to have started following a reduction in staff.**

**Exercise**

Consider a problem that you have experienced recently and using the Problem Description Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.1) describe the problem more accurately.
Now that you have described the problem, you can move on to analysing it. To act most effectively, you should analyse its causes and prioritize the most important factors. Acting on those critical causal factors will solve most of the problem. It is suggested that you use the **brainstorming technique**. *(See Exercise Sheet 1.2).*

### Example:

You are concerned about the quality of services provided at the health centre in which you work. You need assistance in defining and analysing the problems. As a first step in identifying the problems that are affecting the quality of the services offered through a health centre, you can conduct a brainstorming session with users chosen randomly from the health centre. You are in charge of the brainstorming session.

Put some users in a room together with members of staff, and ask them the following question: “In your opinion, what are the problems of quality that the health centre is facing?” You ask them to take a few minutes to think to themselves about this issue, and assure them that there are no right or wrong answers.

Next, each participant states his or her ideas, one at a time, and you write the ideas on a large piece of paper so everyone can see them. The participants add to the list when new ideas come to mind during the discussion. You group all the ideas together, and ask the group to clarify ones that are not clear. After the list of ideas is finished, the group discusses the ideas together. You lead them to consensus on which ideas to keep and which to eliminate.

The result of the brainstorming session is a final list of the problems that are impacting the quality of the services provided at the health centre. The list included:

- no appointments on Tuesdays or Wednesday afternoons
- not enough chairs in the waiting room
- the waiting area is noisy and crowded
- delays in registering on arrival
- not enough nursing staff
- have to wait too long to get an appointment
- long waiting time at appointments
- patients feel that they are not treated with respect

### Exercise

Taking the problem you have described in the previous exercise, use the brainstorming technique to assess the causes of the problem. Use the Brainstorming Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.2) and if you cannot access a group, try brainstorming on your own.
Once you have analysed the causes of a problem you can use a **Prioritization Matrix** to prioritize the important causes *(see Exercise Sheet 1.3)*.

By using this method of prioritizing problems, you are able to look at the data and determine which problems are most important according to this group of patients and staff. The general view of the group is that the lack of nursing staff is a widely perceived problem. The second most important problem is perceived as being the long wait to get an appointment and the third most important problem is the long waiting time at the appointment.

Below is an example of the results you might achieve when you have completed Exercise Sheet 1.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Total points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No appointments on Tuesday afternoons</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough chairs in the waiting room</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The waiting room is noisy and crowded</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in registering on arrival</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough nursing staff</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long waiting time at appointments</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long wait to get an appointment</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise**

Taking the problem you have accurately described and analysed in the previous exercise, use the Prioritization Matrix Tool *(Exercise Sheet 1.3)* to prioritize the important causes.

You have now described and analysed your problem, and prioritized the causes. The next step is to start planning your way forward. Given that you have decided to be the change agent and advocate for change, it is useful to assess your strengths and weaknesses and consider where your opportunities and threats are going to come from.
SWOT analysis is a very effective tool for identifying your strengths and weaknesses, and for examining the opportunities and threats you may face. Carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework will help you to focus your activities on areas where you are strong, and where the greatest opportunities lie (see Exercise Sheet 1.4). Below is an example of the results you might achieve when you have completed Exercise Sheet 1.4.

Example:

When applying the questions to oneself the following might apply:

Strengths:
- I have a good knowledge of the health system and the health service
- I have credibility as a practitioner
- I have good interpersonal skills
- I have the support of my professional peers

Weaknesses:
- I have no advocacy experience
- I have little knowledge of financial systems and processes

Opportunities:
- The professional association will take an interest in staffing issues and can provide support

Threats:
- External budgetary constraints/controls
- The health centre not seen as a priority for funding

In summary, I have professional credibility and peer support but I lack knowledge relating to financial systems. I can harness the expertise of the professional association to get the issue on the decision-makers agenda. Given this assessment, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that I have or can get the capacity to proceed.

Exercise

Using the SWOT Analysis Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.4), complete a SWOT analysis on yourself.

Having completed a SWOT analysis on yourself, you should now complete a Force Field Analysis.
Force field analysis

Force field analysis is a method used to get a complete view of all the forces for and against a plan so that a decision can be made which takes into account all interests. In effect, this is a method of weighing both the pros and cons (see Exercise Sheet 1.5). Below is an example of the results you might achieve when you have completed Exercise Sheet 1.5.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forces for change</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Forces against change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not seen as priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of professional association</td>
<td></td>
<td>No advocacy experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive data accessible</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not know decision-makers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this case the forces for and against are even, so there is a 50/50 chance of success. I need to determine whether I should proceed or not. It will depend on the significance or importance of the issue.

Exercise

Using the Force Field Analysis Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.5), complete a force field analysis on the problem you have been working on in the previous exercises.
Now that you have a clearly defined problem, and a plan to address the problem, you can prepare yourself to advocate for change. Data and research are essential for making informed decisions when choosing a problem to work on, identifying solutions to the problem, and setting realistic goals.

The following section will address:

- means by which you can find evidence;
- how to analyse the usefulness and appropriateness of the evidence; and
- how to use the evidence in advocating.

The evidence

Your ability to provide evidence-based arguments to advocate for change depends on finding the best available data, information or research. Good data can be the most persuasive argument. What data can be used to best support your arguments? Given the data, can you realistically reach the goal?

You can use data to:

- identify issues for policy action; and
- widen the range of possible solutions to a problem.

Data can also be used to:

- affect what is considered changeable or achievable in a policy process;
- choose an advocacy goal; and
- directly influence decision-makers (the primary audience of an advocacy programme).

However access to data is variable. Many organizations still have manual data collection methods which make it difficult to summarize the data or report on trends. Many nurses still do not have access to electronic sources of data such as the Internet.
Libraries may be situated long distances from the work place and professional associations may not have the resources to respond to calls for assistance to gather data or information. However, often where this occurs the policy developers and decision-makers also have limited information resources. So one should not be deterred.

Information can be provided in the form of ‘stories’ or case studies which provide a description of the situation as described by those who either experienced it or observed it. This form of evidence is legitimate and can often be very persuasive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any investigation will require resources and takes up the time and energy of respondents, interviewers and decision-makers. It is therefore important that these resources are used cost-effectively and not wasted collecting a lot of information which is never used. This requires that the process be carefully focused on particular practical or policy issues.

Realistic possibilities for change may not be immediately obvious from statistical analysis. It may also require careful analysis of particular cases of success or failure and/or consultation regarding what different stakeholders see as possible ways forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To investigate the percentage of women in a rural area of Columbia using a contraceptive, you would use a combination of local health clinic data and perhaps a survey of the women in the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To investigate the extent of the women’s knowledge of modern methods and the source of such methods, you would conduct a survey but also support this with focus group meetings and interviews.
The main objective of the search for information is to be able to put together a strong case against the current situation and a strong case in support of the change you are proposing. The list below indicates the types of information you need at a high level in order to develop your proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Case against the current proposed situation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Case in support of the change</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document current adverse responses to current situation.</td>
<td>Show the positive outcomes of change that have occurred elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify people who have been adversely affected by the current situation.</td>
<td>Show that change makes economic sense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the consequences of inaction.</td>
<td>Demonstrate that it is feasible to reach the goal of the proposed change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note the benefits of the change to health sector development and infrastructure building.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So where do you start in developing your case? What type of question should you ask to facilitate your search? *(See Exercise Sheet 1.6)*

To provide yourself with a manageable approach to your search, you need to break the question down into meaningful segments. For example:

- Client
- Intervention
- Outcome
Example

Using the Case Study of the Health Centre, the problem of “Insufficient nursing staff to meet client needs” needs to be segmented. This can be done by breaking it down into:
• meeting client needs (client)
• nursing staff ratios (intervention)
• improved client services (outcome)

You can now use these segments to pose questions you may wish to ask. For example:
• What level of nursing staff is required to meet client needs?
• What ratio of nursing staff to client is used by similar health clinics that do meet client service standards?
• How do I determine the appropriate level of nursing staff to meet our client needs?
• What standards exist for setting appropriate nursing staff to client ratios?

The common words in most of these questions are “nursing staff ratios” which can now be used as the basis for the search.

Exercise

Using Search Focus Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.6), establish the focus for your search.

Search preparation

There is a set of questions which, when answered, provide you with a way forward, while also highlighting the risks associated with your search.

• **What do we want to know?** What does this imply for the main focus of the investigation? What level of detail is required?

• **Whom do we ask?** What does this imply for the types of questions which can be asked? What is the best timing of the investigation?

• **What methods are to be used?** What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of each?

• **Who is to be involved in the investigation?** Which parts of the investigation are best conducted by external researchers, programme staff, or grassroots groups? (See Exercise Sheet 1.7)
## Example

Using the Health Centre Case Study and applying the questions, the answers might be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do we want to know?</strong> What does this imply for the main focus of the investigation? The level of detail required?</td>
<td>Nurse ratios for the health centre which meet client needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whom do we ask?</strong> What does this imply for the types of questions which can be asked? The timing of the investigation?</td>
<td>The organization The staff and clients The central authority Professional associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What methods are to be used?</strong> What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of each?</td>
<td>Search of routine data sites Literature searches: libraries/professional association resources/Internet/Interviews/focus groups: staff/clients/others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who is to be involved in the investigation?</strong> Which parts of the investigation are best conducted by external researchers, programme staff, or grassroots groups?</td>
<td>Self-interested other staff of the organization Staff of the professional association Other contacts, e.g. librarians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Exercise

Using the Search Preparation Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.7), prepare questions to a search you want to carry out.

### Case development

Having become clear about the focus of the questions to be asked and having developed your search plan, you are now ready to begin gathering information to develop your proposal ("case") using the outline provided at the beginning of this module *(see Exercise Sheet 1.8).*
Example

Using the Health Centre Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case against the current situation</th>
<th>Type of information required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document adverse responses to current situation.</td>
<td>Staff turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Client complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiting times and numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify people who have been adversely affected by</td>
<td>Clients and their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the current situation.</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the consequences of inaction.</td>
<td>Increased staff turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased illness profile of clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased waiting times and numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased client discontent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential adverse media response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show the positive outcomes of change that has</td>
<td>Examples of best practice from the literature and other health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occurred elsewhere.</td>
<td>services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show that change makes economic sense.</td>
<td>Cost of high staff turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost of increased illness (transfer cost to acute care)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost of having to react to community and media discontent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate that it is feasible to reach the goal</td>
<td>Consider different staff mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the proposed change.</td>
<td>Example of innovation and best practice elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note the benefits of the change to health sector</td>
<td>Increased efficiency without impacting negatively on client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development.</td>
<td>outcomes and without adverse community and media reactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise

Using the Case Development Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.8), determine the type of information you will require.

You now have a focus for your search and an indication of the information required. But where and how will you find the information? If you are familiar with the appropriate data sources available, then proceed to the next section. If not, before proceeding go to Information Sheet 1.1.
(See Exercise Sheet 1.9)

### Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of information required</th>
<th>Potential sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff turnover</td>
<td>Health centre reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client complaints</td>
<td>Departmental reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting times and numbers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Increased staff turnover    | Health centre reports                  |
| Increased illness profile of clients | Departmental reports       |
| Increased waiting times and numbers |                                  |
| Increased client discontent |                                        |
| Potential adverse media response |                                    |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of best practice from the literature and other health services</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cost of high staff turnover | Health centre reports                  |
| Cost of increased illness (transfer cost to acute care) | Departmental reports       |
| Cost of having to react to community and media discontent         |                                        |

| Consider different staff mix | Literature |
| Example of innovation and best practice elsewhere |                       |

| Increased efficiency without impacting negatively on client outcomes and without adverse community and media reactions | Literature |

### Exercise

Using the Information Source Audit Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.9), apply the questions to a search you want to carry out.
Appraising the evidence

The quality of data includes its accuracy, completeness, timeliness, relevance, and transferability in the context of its “fitness for use.” In other words, is the quality of the data “good enough” for its intended purpose?

The first level of appraisal of any data or information can proceed as follows:

- Does the data set contain the necessary data elements to answer the business question?
- Are the data relevant enough given the intended use?
- Are the data accurate enough given the intended use?
- Are the data complete enough given the intended use?
- Are the data timely enough given the intended use?

If an answer is no, then what will it take (time, cost, effort) to make it fit for the intended use? Are you able to access the resources?

- If not, are there alternative data sources?
- If not, are you willing to incur the cost to create the data source?
- If not, should you change the question to match the data?

The second level of appraisal should consider the following:

**Authority and currency**

What are the credentials and credibility of author; data collection system; organizations; individuals?

What is the status of publisher?

What is the date of collection; publication?

**Objectivity and reliability**

Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?

Is the information valid?

How reliable are the results/outcomes?

Are the ideas/arguments logical?

Is the language free of emotion?
**Coverage**

Does it extensively or marginally cover the issue being searched?

Is it a primary or secondary source of information?

**Applicability**

What is the intended audience?

Are the results/outcomes transferable?

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**Exercise**

Using the Information Analysis Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.10), apply the questions to a search you want to carry out.

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**Applying the evidence**

It is now time to go back to the elements of the case that is to be presented. You have completed your search. You have analysed the usefulness of the information to your case. Now it is time to summarize the relevant useful information according to the particular aspects of the case you will be putting together.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case against the current situation</th>
<th>Summary of evidence collected</th>
<th>Source of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document adverse responses to current situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify people who have been adversely affected by the current situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the consequences of inaction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show the positive outcomes of change that has occurred elsewhere.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show that change makes economic sense.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate that it is feasible to reach the goal of the proposed change.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note the benefits of the change to health sector development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise

Using the Case Documentation Tool (Exercise Sheet 1.11), summarize and classify the information you have searched and analysed and found useful to your case. Also record the sources of the information.

But what if you have not been able to find the evidence to support your case? You may have to set up and conduct your own research. If you have found sufficient evidence then proceed.

References

- Marketing Teacher ([www.marketingteacher.com/Lessons/lesson_swot.htm](http://www.marketingteacher.com/Lessons/lesson_swot.htm)).
- Mindtools ([www.Mindtools.com](http://www.Mindtools.com)).
DATA SOURCES

Routine data collection

Failure to build upon existing information wastes the time and resources of all involved. It is likely that those involved will rapidly become tired of answering similar questions in different assessments unless the usefulness of doing so is clearly apparent to them. This will seriously affect the reliability of any information obtained.

Reviewing existing information includes looking at obvious sources like programme records and statistics.

Non-routine data collection

Collecting non-routine data tends to be both time and resource consuming and should only be used when routine data are not available or there are significant gaps in the data. The most useful and used tools are:

- Participant observation
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Service exit surveys
- Household/population surveys

Libraries

Libraries can be accessed personally, by telephone, e-mail or the Internet. They can be your most useful resource. Upon completing Module 1, you should be able to give the librarian clear instructions for your search.

If you are doing the search in the library yourself:

1. Use keyword searching for a narrow or complex search topic. Use subject searching for a broad subject. Print or write down the citation (author, title, etc.) and the
location of information (call number and library). Note the circulation status. When you pull the book from the shelf, scan the bibliography for additional sources. Watch for book-length bibliographies and annual reviews on your subject; they list citations to hundreds of books and articles in one subject area.

2. Use periodical indexes and abstracts to find citations to articles. The indexes and abstracts may be in print or computer-based format or both. Choose the indexes and format best suited to your particular topic. Ask at the reference desk if you need help figuring out which index and format would be best suited for your needs. You can find periodical articles by the article author or title by using the periodical indexes in the library catalogue. When you have recorded or printed out the citation from the index, locate the library that owns the periodical you want by looking up the title of the periodical in the library catalogue.

Professional organizations/unions

If you have a professional association, union or registration authority they can be an invaluable resource. They are likely to have a common interest and to be a supporter of your case. Many have their own libraries or can access libraries for you. It is also more than likely that they will have Internet access and be able to assist you with your search.

The Internet

The Internet is increasingly becoming available to health professionals, so it is worth detailing the process for accessing information on the Internet.

Search engines

Search engines, like any other tool, are much more effective when you learn to use them well. This chapter will introduce the basic concepts involved with searching on the Internet, and provide some general tips about how to use these tools.
There are over 800 million separate web pages on the Internet. Even the most inclusive Internet search engine only provides access to 160 million pages, which is why a good researcher is familiar with more than one search engine, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search engine</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Light</td>
<td>northernlight.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alta Vista</td>
<td>altavista.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inktomi</td>
<td>yahoo.com, msn.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>alltheforums.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>google.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infoseek</td>
<td>infoseek.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excite</td>
<td>excite.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycos</td>
<td>lycos.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic search concepts and tips for searching

Most search engines have both “basic” search forms and “advanced” search forms. The basic search forms are what you are most likely to see on the search engine’s home page. It usually provides a handful of basic search tools, such as the use of AND, OR and “phrase searching”. Somewhere on that same home page, you will probably find a link to an advanced search form that allows more sophisticated search tools, such as the use of “wildcard” characters and the ability to search for terms that are close to each other (often called “proximity searches”).

Using the best search terms

The key to effective searching involves the ability to think of appropriate search terms. Start with the general and move to the specific. You will be searching through hundreds of millions of web pages, so you need to narrow your focus, but not by too much.

Generally, it is better to use more than one term. Using multiple search terms, on the other hand, will narrow the focus of your search and return fewer, but more relevant, results.
Using the right search tools

While no two search engines function identically, most are similar enough that a few basic rules apply almost universally. The basic tool set comprises a few Boolean operators (AND, OR and NOT) and quotation marks ("").

The AND operator

If you are searching for two or more keywords, you should use the “AND” operator. Almost all search engines allow the use of the shorthand notation “+” for the “AND” operator. Place the “+” in front of any word or phrase that must be included. (i.e. +nurse+ratios).

Some search engines require that you spell out the word “and”, and among these some require that you use the all capitals version “AND”. If you do spell out this operator, the best strategy is to always use the “all caps” version.

The OR operator

If you need to cast a broader net, use the OR operator. This will retrieve pages that contain any one of your search terms. This is useful if there are alternative ways of describing a topic. A good example would be searching for information about ‘nurse ratios’ which could also be referred to as ‘nursing ratios’: “nurse OR nursing ratios”.

The NOT operator

Sometimes a search term you use will also be associated with a different topic. To exclude pages that are not related to your search, use the NOT operator. Most search engines allow the use of the “-” sign as short-hand for the NOT operator.

Quotation marks

Use quotation marks for phrases. If you are searching for a phrase like “community health”, use double quotation marks (""") to distinguish it from a search for either one of those two words.
Facilitator’s Guide —
Defining the Problem

Facilitator’s preparation time:

45 minutes

Group exercise time:

60 minutes

Resources:

Exercise Sheets 1.1 - 1.5
Butcher paper, white board or black board
Pens/pencils/paper

Instructions:

• The exercise is best done with no more than 20 people.
• Read Module 1, Session 1 and go through each of the exercises.
• Familiarize yourself with the Exercise Sheets.
• Make sure you have enough copies of the Exercise Sheets for each participant in your group.
• Make sure that you have the resources you need, e.g. pre-prepared butcher paper.
• Introduce the topic and explain the objectives of the exercise.
• Begin with Exercise Sheet 1.1 and use it to help the group define the problem clearly by answering the questions provided. Then summarize the results to form a ‘problem statement’.
• Now go to Exercise Sheet 1.3 and prioritize the causes of the problem. Follow the instructions in the sheet.
• By now you will have defined the problem and prioritized the causes.
• Next go to Exercise Sheet 1.4 to determine what are the internal strengths and weaknesses of the group and what are the external opportunities in dealing with the problem. You may not always need to complete this exercise as sometimes it is enough just to do the ‘force field’ analysis in Exercise Sheet 1.5.
• Then you can use Exercise Sheet 5 to assess the forces for and against change that have to be addressed.

**Exercise Sheet 1.2** can be used at any time when you need to use the brainstorming technique to collect people’s collective views on an issue.

**This completes Module 1, Session 1**
PROBLEM DESCRIPTION TOOL

What is it?
The process of describing the problem using the Problem Description Tool assists you to understand how the problem affects the process being examined.

Who uses it?
Any person or group who identify a discrepancy between "what is" and "what should be" and want to rectify the discrepancy.

Why use it?
To identify the problem and clearly articulate it so that the plan will consist of the right solutions.

How to use it?

- Explain the objective of the session to the group.
- Write the problem on a board or large sheet of paper.

To help you describe the problem, you should try to answer certain questions about the problem, such as:

How frequently does the problem occur?

When does it generally occur (for example, at a particular time of the year, on a set week, on a specific day)? Is the problem related to time?

Where does it generally occur (for example, is it limited to a particular area, or is it everywhere)? What relationship does the problem have to location?

Who is most affected (for example, individuals or families, people of different gender, race, age, or socio-economic status)?
• Answer the questions set out below and summarize the outcomes.

| How frequently does the problem occur? |  
|____________________________________|
| When does it generally occur?      |  
|____________________________________|
| Where does it generally occur?     |  
|____________________________________|
| Who is most affected?             |  
|____________________________________|

Finally, summarize the problem and confirm it with the group.

Problem statement: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
EXERCISE SHEET 1.2

BRAINSTORMING

What is it?
Brainstorming is a technique that helps a group generate as many ideas as possible in a short time period.

Who uses it?
Any group, of any number, who has an interest in the problem. If you invite people with different perspectives to brainstorm, you are more likely to see innovative ideas generated by the group.

Why use it?
To identify problems, analyse causes, select alternative solutions, do strategic planning, generate ideas for marketing change, and handle many other situations.

How to use it:

1. Explain the objective of the session: for example, to select problems, analyse causes, or generate ideas.

2. Explain the technique to the group. Tell them that you are looking for a lot of ideas, and that you want their thoughts and ideas to flow freely. There is no right or wrong answer. The idea of brainstorming is to produce as many innovative ideas as possible.

3. Silent reflection: Ask the participants to think about the proposed objective or topic for a few minutes. (Time: approximately 5 minutes.)

4. Brainstorm: The participants call out their ideas and add those that come to mind during the discussion. Write down the ideas using the words of the speaker. Ask for clarification only if the meaning is not clear. (Time: approximately 20 minutes.)
5. Once the list is finished, discuss it with the group to:
   - Clarify the meaning of some ideas
   - Combine similar ideas that are worded in different ways
   - Eliminate those ideas which are not related to the objective of the session.

At the end of this stage, you will have reduced the list of ideas to those that represent most of the major ideas of the group. (Time: 5-15 minutes.)
PRIORITIZATION MATRIX TOOL

What is it?
A Prioritization Matrix is a useful technique you can use to achieve consensus about an issue. The matrix helps you rank problems or issues (usually generated through brainstorming) by a particular criterion. Then you can more clearly see which problems are the most important to work on solving first.

Who uses it?
Members of your team, or a group of users, can participate in the process.

Why use it?
To determine what your users or your team members consider to be the most pressing problem with your programme or health service.

When to use it?
When you need to prioritize problems, or to achieve consensus about an issue.

How to use it:
Fill out the Prioritization Matrix chart with the group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Total points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. In the first column, write down the problems that were mentioned in the brainstorming session.

2. In the second to fourth columns, use the following questions to give a rating:
   - **Frequency**: How frequent is the problem? Does it occur often or only on rare occasions?
   - **Importance**: From the point of view of the users, what are the most important problems? What are the problems that you want to resolve?
   - **Feasibility**: How realistic is it that we can resolve the problem? Will it be easy or difficult?

3. Each participant gives a score out of 5 (1 being the least and 5 the most) for each box

4. You add together the scores for each box (If there are 10 in attendance the highest score in a box is 100) then total the row for each issue.

5. The totals help you see clearly how to prioritize the problems. *The higher the score the higher the priority.*

### Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Total points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No appointments on Tuesday</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough chairs in waiting room</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long wait to get an appointment</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in registering on arrival</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough nursing staff</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long waiting time at appointments</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SWOT Analysis

What is it?
You can use a SWOT analysis to identify and analyse the Strengths and Weaknesses of your organization, as well as the Opportunities and Threats revealed by the information you have gathered on the external environment.

Who uses it?
The team members and the managers.

Why use it?
To develop a plan that takes into consideration many different internal and external factors, and maximizes the strengths and opportunities while minimizing the impact of the weaknesses and threats.

How to use it:

1. Explain the objectives of the session and the process:

2. **Internal analysis:** Examine your/group capabilities. This can be done by analysing your/group strengths and weaknesses.

   **Strengths:**
   What are your advantages? What do you do well? What do other people see as your strengths?
   Consider this from your own point of view and from the point of view of the people you deal with. Do not be modest - be realistic

   **Weaknesses:**
   What could you improve? What do you do badly? What should you avoid?
   Again, consider this from an internal and external basis - do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you do not see? Are your competitors doing any better than you? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.
3. **External analysis:** Identify those events, issues, trends, evidence that pose opportunities for your organization/group, and those that pose threats or obstacles to performance. Decide whether the answers or the data collected reveal external opportunities or threats.

**Opportunities:**
- Where are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?
- Where are your support networks?
- Where is the evidence to support your case?

**Threats:**
- What obstacles do you face?
- Do you have access to the information you need?
- Who is likely to oppose your position?

4. Enter the information you have collected in steps one and two into a table as illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal strengths</th>
<th>Internal weaknesses</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External opportunities</th>
<th>External threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. You can use this information to help you develop a strategy that uses the strengths and opportunities to reduce the weaknesses and threats, and to achieve the objectives of your organization/group.
FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

What is it?
Force Field Analysis is a technique based on the premise that change is a result of a struggle between forces of resistance (forces that impede change) and driving forces (forces that favour change). By using Force Field Analysis, you can learn which course of action will be the best one to implement because it will have the most driving forces and the least resistant forces.

Who uses it?
The team members, the managers, the users.

Why use it?
To determine the best course of action to take.

How to use it

1. Explain the process to the group. Define the problem or issue you will be discussing.

2. Create a chart on newsprint or chalkboard with two headings: forces for change and forces against change.

3. Have the group brainstorm which forces belong in each column. Forces for change are characteristics of the issue that make it easy to take place; forces against change are characteristics of the issue that make it difficult to take place.

4. Rate each force on a scale of 1-5 with 1 weak and 5 strong. Total the scores and evaluate the chart together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forces for change</th>
<th>Forces against change</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forces for change</th>
<th>Forces against change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Peer support</td>
<td>Budget constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Community support</td>
<td>Not seen as priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Support of professional association</td>
<td>No advocacy experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Supportive data accessible</td>
<td>Don’t know decision makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If the score for the forces against change are greater than the score for forces for change, you might have to reconsider the feasibility of proceeding. Success is likely to be very difficult. If the score for forces for change are highest then you can proceed but develop strategies for reducing the negative impact of the forces against change.

6. Now summarize and develop strategies for overcoming or reducing or weakening the impact of the forces against change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

_MODULE 1: Identifying the problem and the desired outcome_
FACILITATOR’S GUIDE – GATHERING EVIDENCE

Facilitator’s preparation time:
45 minutes

Group exercise time:
90 minutes

Resources:
Exercise Sheets 1.6 - 1.11
Information Sheet 1.1
Butcher paper, white board or black board
Pens/pencils/paper

Instructions:
• The exercise is best done with no more than 20 people.
• Read Module 1, Session 2 and go through each of the exercises.
• Familiarize yourself with the Exercise Sheets and the Information Sheet.
• Make sure you have enough copies of the Exercise Sheets for each participant in your group.
• Make sure that you have the resources you need, e.g. pre-prepared butcher paper.
• Introduce the topic and explain the objectives of the exercise.
• Begin with Exercise Sheet 1.6 and use this to establish the focus of the search you need to do to gather the evidence to support your case. You may not need to do this exercise if your ‘problem statement’ gives you sufficient focus for the search.
• Go to Exercise Sheet 1.7. This exercise will help the group prepare the right questions for searching the evidence required.
• Now go to Exercise Sheet 1.8. This exercise will guide the group in deciding what information is needed once the group is clear about what questions they need to ask.
• Next go to Exercise Sheet 1.9, which will assist the group to select the appropriate sources of information available. Given that this is a learning exercise, the group will not be able to actually get the information but you can give them some instructions so that they could proceed on their own.

• Using Exercise Sheet 1.10, take the group through the process for making sure that any information they do get is useful, reliable and valid. Again the group cannot do this, but they can develop an understanding of what they would need to do.

• Now go to Exercise Sheet 1.11 and use it to show how the group could document the case for change from the information they would have gathered.

This completes Module 1, Session 2
SEARCH FOCUS TOOL

What is it?
The Search Focus Tool guides you in developing the question should you ask to facilitate your search for evidence.

Who uses it?
Any person or group wanting to embark on a well planned search for information.

Why use it?
To ensure that you take a cost-effective approach to your search.

How to use it:

• If you are working with a group, explain the process and rationale for the exercise.
• State the problem or issue you will be clarifying prior to carrying out a search for evidence.
• Break down the problem statement into the focus areas listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential focus areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client/problem</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now use these focus areas to pose questions you may wish to ask. __________________________________________

_________________________________________________

The common words in most of these questions are:
(e.g. nursing staff ratios)__________________________

These words can now be used to search for evidence to support your case.
SEARCH PREPARATION TOOL

What is it?
The Search Preparation Tool assists in clarifying the parameters of the search and helps minimize the time and energy spent on the exercise.

Who uses it?
Any person or group wanting to embark on a well planned search for information.

Why use it?
To identify the potential risks, strengths and weaknesses of the information search.

How to use it:

• If working with a group explain the process and rationale for the exercise.
• Using the search statement you have agreed to in Exercise Sheet 1.6 to answer the following questions.

Search statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do we want to know?</strong>&lt;br&gt;What does this imply for the main focus of the investigation?&lt;br&gt;The level of detail required?</td>
<td>Nurse ratios for the health centre which meet client needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whom do we ask?</strong>&lt;br&gt;What does this imply for the types of questions which can be asked?&lt;br&gt;The timing of the investigation?</td>
<td>The organization&lt;br&gt;The staff and clients&lt;br&gt;The central authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What methods are to be used?</strong>&lt;br&gt;What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of each?</td>
<td>Search of routine data sites&lt;br&gt;Literature searches: Libraries/professional association database</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who is to be involved in the investigation?</strong>&lt;br&gt;Which parts of the investigation are best conducted by external researchers, programme staff, grassroots groups?</td>
<td>Self&lt;br&gt;Interested other staff of the organization&lt;br&gt;Staff of the professional association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The result of the exercise will tell you:

- Who should assist with the search
- What methods you could use
CASE DEVELOPMENT TOOL

What is it?
The Case Development Tool guides you in determining your information needs to put your case together.

Who uses it?
Any person or group wanting to embark on a well planned search for information.

Why use it?
To ensure that you access information sources appropriate to your particular search need.

How to use it:

• If you are working with a group explain the process and rationale for the exercise.
• State the problem or issue you will be clarifying.
• Break down the problem statement into the segments listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case against the current situation</th>
<th>Type of information required</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Document adverse responses to current situation. | Staff turnover  
Client complaints  
Waiting times and numbers | |
| Identify people who have been adversely affected by the current situation | Clients and their families  
Staff  
Other health services | |
| Demonstrate the consequences of inaction. | Increased staff turnover  
Increased waiting times and numbers | |
| Show the positive outcomes of change that has occurred elsewhere | Examples of best practice from the literature and other health services | |
| Show that change makes economic sense | Cost of high staff turnover  
Cost of increased illness (transfer cost to acute care) | |

MODULE 1: Identifying the problem and the desired outcome
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case against the current situation</th>
<th>Type of information required</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate that it is feasible to reach the goal of the proposed change.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider different staff mix Example of innovation and best practice elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note the benefits of the change to health sector development and infrastructure building.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased efficiency without impacting negatively on client outcomes and without adverse community and media reactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You now have a focus for your search and an indication of the information you require and where to get it.
**Exercise Sheet 1.9**

**Information Source Audit Tool**

**What is it?**
The Information Source Audit Tool guides you in determining the appropriate information sources to target in your search.

**Who uses it?**
Any person or group wanting to target their information search.

**Why use it?**
To ensure that you access information sources appropriate to your particular search need.

**How to use it:**

- If you are working with a group explain the process and rationale for the exercise.
- List your information needs in the left column and then list in the right column the sources for each information need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of information required</th>
<th>Potential sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Health unit databases
- Clinical management data – information regarding clients, services and programmes
- Resource management data – information regarding staff, finances, supplies and capital

Departmental (regional/national) databases
- Morbidity and mortality
- Epidemiological
- Demographic
- Resource utilization

Rapid assessment procedures
- Participant observation
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Service exit surveys
- Household surveys

Library
- Journals
- Dissertations/Theses
- Research
- Reports

Professional associations

Policies
Guidelines
Standards
Case studies
The Internet
**INFORMATION ANALYSIS TOOL**

**What is it?**
The Information Analysis Tool guides you in assessing the integrity and usefulness of the information you have collected.

**Who uses it?**
Any person wanting to critically analyse data sets and information extracted from a search.

**Why use it?**
To ensure that you access information sources are useable.

**How to use it:**
- First record the details of the information source.
- Apply the questions set out below to the information source you are analysing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data/information source 1</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authority and currency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the credentials and credibility of author; data collection system; organisations; individuals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the status of publisher?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the date of collection; publication?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objectivity and reliability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the information valid?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How reliable are the results/outcomes?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the ideas/arguments logical?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the language free of emotion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it extensively or marginally cover the issue being searched?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it a primary or secondary source of information?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Applicability</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the intended audience?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the results/outcomes transferable?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Do not use any information that does not meet the criteria above.

• Repeat the exercise for each information source you have collected.

Data/information source 2
_________________________________________________
_______________________________________________
CASE DOCUMENTATION TOOL

What is it?
The Case Documentation Tool guides you in developing the evidence-supported case against the current situation and for the proposed change.

Who uses it?
Any person wanting to put an evidenced supported case for change.

Why use it?
To ensure that an evidence based approach is used to support a case for change.

How to use it:

- Document a summary of the evidence collected from your search.
- Then document the details of the information sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case against the current situation</th>
<th>Summary of evidence collected</th>
<th>Source of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document adverse responses to current situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify people who have been adversely affected by the current situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the consequences of inaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show the positive outcomes of change that has occurred elsewhere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show that change makes economic sense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate that it is feasible to reach the goal of the proposed change</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note the benefits of the change to health sector development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case against the current situation</th>
<th>Type of information required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Document adverse responses to current situation. | Staff turnover  
Client complaints  
Waiting times and numbers |
| Identify people who have been adversely affected by the current situation. | Clients and their families  
Staff  
Other health services |
| Demonstrate the consequences of inaction. | Increased staff turnover  
Increased illness profile of clients  
Increased waiting times and numbers  
Increased client discontent  
Potential adverse media response |
| Show the positive outcomes of change that has occurred elsewhere | Examples of best practice from the literature and other health services |
MODULE 1: Identifying the problem and the desired outcome